

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9870

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 7672

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF YOUNG MILITARY OFFICER ABOUT ARMED FORCES
COMMITTEE

REF: ADDIS 7654

INTRODUCTION. SOURCE IS YOUNG, HIGHLY EDUCATED ARMY MAJOR WHO
BELIEVED BE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH MEMBERS ARMED FORCES COMMITTEE.
HIS INFORMATION AND OBSERVATIONS HAVE BEEN GENERALLY RELIABLE IN
PAST. END.

1. SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF JULY 2 THAT CURRENT MILITARY MOVEMENT
PROCEEDING RELATIVELY WELL. EARLIER EPISODES MILITARY DISSIDENCE
BEGAN SPONTANEOUSLY, EVOLVED HAPHAZARDLY AND FIZZLED OUT UNEX-
PECTEDLY. MILITARY ACTIVITY BEGINNING JUNE 30 ON OTHER HAND HAD
CENTRAL DIRECTION AND SPECIFIC GOALS.

2. ARMED FORCES CENTRAL COMMITTEE SAID INCLUDE BOTH CAPABLE
EDUCATED AND NON-EDUCATED MEMBERS WITH EACH MEMBER HAVING A
SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY, E.G., ARRESTS, PRESS, CABINET LIAISON.
REPORTEDLY, THIRD DIVISION HAS JOINED MOVEMENT AND IS REPRESENTED
ON COMMITTEE. WHILE COMMITTEE OPERATES BY CONSENSUS WITH NO ONE
PREMIER, YOUNG MILITARY LAWYER, WHOM SOURCE DESCRIBED AS "SOME-
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WHAT RADICAL," SEEMS BE ASSERTING LEADERSHIP. ACCORDING SOURCE,

FIRST GOAL OF COMMITTEE IS DETENTION OF POWERFUL AND EXPLOITIVE INDIVIDUALS WHO BLOCKING REFORM AND WHO SYMBOLIZE TRADITIONS REQUIRING CHANGE, E.G., RAS ASRATE - FEUDALISM AND PRIVILEGED ARISTOCRACY; LIKE-SILTANTAT HABTE-MARIAM - DESTRUCTIVE POLITICAL MANEUVERING; YILMA DERESSA - CORRUPTION. (NOTE - SOURCE DOWNPLAYED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE ARRESTED AND THOSE SLATED FOR ARREST. HE DESCRIBED LATTER (E.G., RAS MESFIN, ISKINDER DESTA, MOD GEN ABIYE) AS HUMBLER, POWERLESS FUGITIVES.)

3. DETENTIONS ALSO SERVE PURPOSE OF SHAKING-UP ESTABLISHMENT'S COMPLACENCY, PRESSURING IEG MOVE FORWARD WITH REFORM, AND ISOLATING EMPEROR BY REMOVING HIS POLITICAL WEAPONS. SOURCE SAID THAT, WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, MILITARY POSSESSED ABUNDANCE PROBABLE CHARGES AGAINST PREVIOUS AND CURRENT DETAINEES (AND OTHERS ON ARREST LIST). SOURCE SAID THAT MILITARY COMMITTEE INTENDS TURN OVER DETAINED OFFICIALS TO COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY FOR TRIAL AND PUNISHMENT.

4. CENTRAL COMMITTEE ALSO PLANS NEGOTIATE WITH CABINET RE HIGH LEVEL CHANGES IN MILITARY STRUCTURE. (GEN AMAN-MICHAEL ANDOM IS THOUGHT BEING CONSIDERED FOR HIGH POST BY COMMITTEE.) COMMITTEE WILL THEN INSTRUCT ENDALKACHEW TO CARRY ON WITH HIS WORK. ACCORDING SOURCE, IF COMMITTEE DECIDES BROADEN ITS SCOPE, IT WILL CALL ON MORE SENIOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS FOR ASSISTANCE. AS OF NOW, MILITARY COMMITTEE NOT STUDYING EVEN MEDIUM-TERM ISSUES, SUCH AS CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION OR LAND REFORM.

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